

15 JUN
1976

STATINTL MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Personnel
FROM : [REDACTED]
Chairman, Office of Personnel Advisory Group
SUBJECT : Assessment Center

STATINTL The Office of Personnel Advisory Group (OPAG) has been
asked to consider whether or not the MP Career Service
should utilize the management tool known as the "assessment
center". To assist with their research, OPAG members
STATINTL reviewed background material on assessment centers and were
briefed by [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] also briefed OPAG on the
present career panel system.

In our two examples in the Agency, OJCS and the Office
of Communications, neither one has progressed far enough to
render explicit information about career development or
management ability nor have these offices been able to
explain exactly where the "tool" fits in with their present
organizational system. OJCS is further along in the use of
this "tool" and plans to evaluate and identify managerial
talent at the Branch Chief level - a point in an employee's
career which OPAG feels is too late for identifying managers
for OP. By comparison, the Office of Communications is now
at the developmental state and has not yet completed the
administrative procedures for its first center. Assessment
centers offer the opportunity to test, evaluate, interview
in depth and measure the strengths and weaknesses of the
individual. However, the use of assessment centers within
the Agency is in its rudimentary stages and has some negative
aspects which detract from its effectiveness. For example,
it is a very time-consuming process, i.e., administrative
requirement can take up to a year to complete; only a few
people can attend each session; and follow-up, evaluation
and feedback can last several months.

The cost effectiveness of such a program would be
difficult to measure. The money spent in developing an
assessment center presents an opportunity cost dilemma which
has to be evaluated in relation to existing programs and
other alternatives. The assessment center would require the
commitment of many man-hours by OP and OMS and the absence
of employees from their offices for several days during the
actual running of the center. The logistical problem of

conducting a session at a site away from day-to-day activities is another consideration. In addition, OPAG is concerned that OMS/PSS is limited in its ability to assume the responsibility for another assessment center without additional resources.

Although OPAG cannot deny there are positive aspects to the assessment center, it does not recommend, at this time, its implementation for the MP Career Service. However, OPAG does not want to close the door on this subject but would suggest taking another look at the progress of the OJCS and Commo assessment centers in one year.

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